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2 **CLAIMS:**

3 What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method in a requesting local knowledge management  
2 server for retrieving digital assets in a distributed  
3 data processing system wherein the digital assets are  
4 stored in a distributed fashion on local storage devices,  
5 the method comprising:  
6 querying a central registry of digital assets for  
7 the location of a requested digital asset, wherein the  
8 central registry stores identity and storage location  
9 information for digital assets within the distributed  
10 data processing system;  
11 receiving the storage location of the requested  
12 digital asset;  
13 sending a request for the requested digital asset to  
14 an identified local knowledge management server having  
15 access to the storage location of the requested digital  
16 asset;  
17 receiving the digital asset from the local knowledge  
18 management server.
- 1 2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein access to  
2 the central registry of digital assets is controlled by a  
3 central knowledge management server.

1 3. The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the  
2 central knowledge management server, prior to allowing  
3 the requesting local knowledge management server to  
4 receive the storage location information, authenticating  
5 that the requesting local knowledge management server is  
6 authorized to access the central registry of digital  
7 assets.

1 4. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein the  
2 central knowledge management server prohibits access to  
3 the central registry of digital assets if the requesting  
4 local knowledge management server is not authenticated.

1 5. The method as recited in claim 1, further  
2 comprising:  
3 receiving a reply from the identified local  
4 knowledge management server requesting that the  
5 requesting local knowledge management server provide  
6 authenticating information to the identified local  
7 knowledge management server indicating that the  
8 requesting local knowledge management server is  
9 authorized to access the requested digital asset.

1 6. The method as recited in claim 5, further  
2 comprising:  
3 sending authenticating information with the request  
4 for the digital asset indicating authority to access the  
5 requested digital asset.

1 7. The method as recited in claim 1, further  
2 comprising:

3 sending authenticating information with the request  
4 for the digital asset indicating authority to access the  
5 requested digital asset.

1 8. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein at least  
2 some transmissions between the requesting digital asset  
3 management system and the identified digital asset  
4 management system are encrypted.

1 9. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the  
2 digital asset comprises one of audio clips, phone  
3 messages, electronically delivered facsimiles, videos,  
4 still photographs, text, and graphics.

1 10. A computer program product in a computer readable  
2 media for use in a requesting local knowledge management  
3 data processing system for retrieving digital assets in a  
4 distributed data processing system wherein the digital  
5 assets are stored in a distributed fashion on local  
6 storage devices, the computer program product comprising:  
7 first instructions for querying a central registry  
8 of digital assets for the location of a requested digital  
9 asset, wherein the central registry stores identity and  
10 storage location information for digital assets within  
11 the distributed data processing system;  
12 second instructions for receiving the storage  
13 location of the requested digital asset;

14        third instructions for sending a request for the  
15 requested digital asset to an identified local knowledge  
16 management server having access to the storage location  
17 of the requested digital asset;  
18        fourth instructions for receiving the digital asset  
19 from the local knowledge management server.

1    11. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,  
2 wherein access to the central registry of digital assets  
3 is controlled by a central knowledge management server.

1    12. The computer program product as recited in claim 11,  
2 wherein the central knowledge management server, prior to  
3 allowing the requesting local knowledge management server  
4 to receive the storage location information,  
5 authenticating that the requesting local knowledge  
6 management server is authorized to access the central  
7 registry of digital assets.

1    13. The computer program product as recited in claim 12,  
2 wherein the central knowledge management server prohibits  
3 access to the central registry of digital assets if the  
4 requesting local knowledge management server is not  
5 authenticated.

1    14. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,  
2 further comprising:  
3        fifth instructions for receiving a reply from the  
4 identified local knowledge management server requesting

5 that the requesting local knowledge management server  
6 provide authenticating information to the identified  
7 local knowledge management server indicating that the  
8 requesting local knowledge management server is  
9 authorized to access the requested digital asset.

1 15. The computer program product as recited in claim 14,  
2 further comprising:

3 sixth instructions for sending authenticating  
4 information with the request for the digital asset  
5 indicating authority to access the requested digital  
6 asset.

1 16. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,  
2 further comprising:

3 fifth instructions for sending authenticating  
4 information with the request for the digital asset  
5 indicating authority to access the requested digital  
6 asset.

1 17. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,  
2 wherein at least some transmissions between the  
3 requesting knowledge management system and the identified .  
4 knowledge management system are encrypted.

1 18. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,  
2 wherein the digital asset comprises one of audio clips,  
3 phone messages, electronically delivered facsimiles,  
4 videos, still photographs, text, and graphics.

1 19. A system in a requesting local knowledge management  
2 data processing system for retrieving digital assets in a  
3 distributed data processing system wherein the digital  
4 assets are stored in a distributed fashion on local  
5 storage devices, the system comprising:

6 first means for querying a central registry of  
7 digital assets for the location of a requested digital  
8 asset, wherein the central registry stores identity and  
9 storage location information for digital assets within  
10 the distributed data processing system;

11 second means for receiving the storage location of  
12 the requested digital asset;

13 third means for sending a request for the requested  
14 digital asset to an identified local knowledge management  
15 server having access to the storage location of the  
16 requested digital asset;

17 fourth means for receiving the digital asset from  
18 the local knowledge management server.

1 20. The system as recited in claim 19, wherein access to  
2 the central registry of digital assets is controlled by a  
3 central knowledge management server.

1 21. The system as recited in claim 20, wherein the  
2 central knowledge management server, prior to allowing  
3 the requesting local knowledge management server to  
4 receive the storage location information, authenticating  
5 that the requesting local knowledge management server is

6 authorized to access the central registry of digital  
7 assets.

1 22. The system as recited in claim 21, wherein the  
2 central knowledge management server prohibits access to  
3 the central registry of digital assets if the requesting  
4 local knowledge management server is not authenticated.

1 23. The system as recited in claim 19, further  
2 comprising:  
3 fifth means for receiving a reply from the  
4 identified local knowledge management server requesting  
5 that the requesting local knowledge management server  
6 provide authenticating information to the identified  
7 local knowledge management server indicating that the  
8 requesting local knowledge management server is  
9 authorized to access the requested digital asset.

1 24. The system as recited in claim 23, further  
2 comprising:  
3 sixth means for sending authenticating information  
4 with the request for the digital asset indicating  
5 authority to access the requested digital asset.

1 25. The system as recited in claim 19, further  
2 comprising:  
3 fifth means for sending authenticating information  
4 with the request for the digital asset indicating  
5 authority to access the requested digital asset.

1 26. The system as recited in claim 19, wherein at least  
2 some transmissions between the requesting knowledge  
3 management system and the identified knowledge management  
4 system are encrypted.

1 27. The system as recited in claim 19, wherein the  
2 digital asset comprises one of audio clips, phone  
3 messages, electronically delivered facsimiles, videos,  
4 still photographs, text, and graphics.